

importance to them; for when the unauthorised preacher walked into a new village, his russet gown at once betrayed his errand, and if both the landlord and the parson were against him, his chance of getting a hearing was small. But on friendly ground his reception was very different. The Poor Priest, however much a 'man of the people' he might be, found his natural radicalism grow cool when, after a long day's walk through a hostile country, he was welcomed at nightfall to the kitchen fire of the moat-house, well fed by the retainers with sack and venison, saved from the Bishop's Summoner at the door, and next morning requested to speak his mind to the people in the churchyard, with the knight standing by him armed for greater security. In those hamlets where the advowson belonged to one of these Lollard gentlemen, the parson probably thought it best to leave the church-door open to the intruder and his hearers. The protection and assistance afforded by so many landlords in the latter years of the fourteenth century was enough to instil into the minds of the preachers the distinction that Wycliffe had made between clerical and lay property.¹

The relation of the Lollards to the ruling classes in the towns was of the same friendly character. A London prentice of the name of Colleyne, who had run away from his master to become a preacher of the "Word, brought the new doctrine to Northampton. The Mayor, John Fox, lodged him in his own house together with a Poor Priest of the neighbourhood, and sent to Oxford to ask that a supply of theologians should be sent to Northampton to give an authoritative exposition of Wycliffism. The Lollards who came to meet this demand were denounced by their enemies, some as men who assumed Oxford degrees that they had never really taken, others as notorious for simony and dishonest dealing. However this may have been, they succeeded, with the help of Fox the Mayor, in completely dominating the place, occupying the pulpits against the will of the incumbents and taking forcible possession of the

¹ Knighton, ii. 174-98, 262; *Inquisitiones post mortem*, Calendar, iii. 275, 281, iv. 201, 213, for Latimer's and Trussell's property; *Rot. Glouc.*, 12 B. II., m. S.